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VISION.
A BOOK OF LYRICS

W. H. ARBOTT

Bunny Abbott,
a former member
of
Ringgold School.

He lives on the
Little River &
cribbled for
Herbene Friend.

of a friend of his to
each other to
"test" for him in
a contest!"

Eric Philip.

From W. H. A.

VISION



VISION

A BOOK OF LYRICS

BY

W. H. ABBOTT

11

But when night falls and the great voices
Roll in from sea—
By starlight, and by candlelight and dreamlight
They come to me.

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET

1914
BLA

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T^O one, who,
As we mortals deem it,
Is dead, but who,
As I believe,
Lives,
And to whom
I owe
More than I can ever express or repay,
I offer
This little tribute of verse;
In the hope that she,
As I have never forgotten her,
May still have some
Remembrance of me.

SWEET things to sweet, and flowers for those I love;
With thoughts that are as flowers, with dropping dew

From tired, sad eyes, and every tear for you
In those wild gardens, whereso'er you rove.
This earth has been a dreary, sunless place,
Since you have left us: now is no delight
In anything, no joy by day or night,
Because I cannot see you face to face.

It seems so strange to think that you should go:
What is this death? Where walk you? Is life sweet
As once it was? Have you still thought or care
For us? Do you yet live? If any prayer
Can pierce the night of that dark world below,
God keep you! I shall come: The time is fleet.

Vision

TO MILTON

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHAT light sat in thy soul, O mighty Bard,
That thou shouldst look thro' sightless orbs,
and see

What the bright-eyed world is blind to? Unto thee,
As to the favoured Jew in dear regard,
Was given both fire and cloud. Yet not such cloud
As broke the fierceness of the desert glare
On sun-scorched lids, but that amazed stare
O' the curtained sense, blindness, a pall and shroud.

Not to have seen the sun is doubtful woe,
Loss unexpressed: but to have looked on light,
Star, sea, flower, mead, all earth's fair mysteries,
Sweet human face, eyes, lips, and then to know
On this side death no other dawn can rise,
Save Egypt's darkness felt, and horrid night!

Trafalgar Square

TRAFalGAR SQUARE

THIS is the mighty city's hub, whence run
The spokes of her great, living wheel: by day
A still storm-centre, where bright fountains play,
An idler's paradise: at set of sun
Quietly asleep! The multitudinous din
Surges by temple and monument, raised to faith
Or pleasure, trade, art, fame, each flaunting Death,—
Roars round the Square and leaves deep peace within.

I like that hour the best when the quick night
Begins. The pleasuring or the homing feet
Of passers: blazing lights: guilt's careless sigh:
Innocent laughter! Oh, the hearts that beat
And break, the while from his star-canopied height
England's sea-hero sweeps the flaming sky!

Vision

LONDON—NOVEMBER

STREETS of black mud, irradiate with fine gold:
Weird traceries limned by the electric arc
On crumbling walls: bare trees: the glint and spark
From barge and shore. The sooty mists that hold
Tropical sunsets: chaste Diana's cold,
Calm kiss, transmuting every dreary mark.
Grimed wharf and warehouse, shining in the dark,
Venetian palaces: new lights on old.

Here meet divine and human. Tattered slips
Of girls and boys dancing to music: wan,
Blear groups of huddled woe, laughing like Pan:
Death, stronger love: Time's broken fool, that sips
Wine at God's Altar: praise on dying lips:
The life in death that breathes and beats in man.

To a Young Girl

TO A YOUNG GIRL

TUSCANY

THE snow that tops yon broider of Apennines
Has two bright colours. It is silver-white
By dawn and noon, silver whose intense light
Flashes across the valleys and the vines.
But ere the warm sun takes his last behold
From his west window, sudden glory fills
The lighted skies and earth, and those white hills
Lie flooded in a blaze of purple gold.

So may your life's day be, dear child, as bright
And snow-pure. May sweet thoughts, that never tire,
And gracious acts attend you all the way,
The happy, happy way, till, at the long twilight,
With troops of loves and one serene desire,
It dies in splendour, like this Tuscan day.

Vision

WE move in double kinship, she and I;
Mostly she lies forgotten, or doth seem
The fluttering ghost of some star-netted dream,
Vaguer than air, than unsubstantial sky:
So strange thro' infinite space, I peer, unmoved,
Into her pictured eyes, and wonder if
I ever spoke with her, or did she live
As we, and has she reasoned, hoped, feared, loved.

Then come the hours, when love's diviner wit
Stirs in her slumber-laden seat, and takes
The deep of hidden things. Then, each to each,
Soul-worshipping, together we do sit,
Ev'n I and she, and our long silence shakes
With glory, into silver-winged speech.

TO live Christ-lorn, to feel no Hand in mine
Thro' the long way: to wander on, with night
About my eyes, and never find the light.
To hear the inconstant wind in oak and pine,
The pitiless, rhythmic roar of the salt sea,
Ebbing and flowing! To read, thro' a thousand springs,
The ceaseless drive and swirl of sundering things,
Nature's vain birth-pangs, and the death to be!

To measure out Time's day: to mark its morn,
And noon, and eve, wasted in sterile strife
For that it hungers after! And to know
Myself no other than the smiling scorn
Of some brute law, which mocks, in death and life,
My heart's deep cry:—Ah, God; if it were so!

Vision

HIGHER and higher up the steep she clomb
With bruised feet, and bore the cross, endued
With every noble grace that may become
A fond help-meet, a mother wise and good.
Her hope was in her sons: from them she drew
Strength to endure. She topt the crest: far, wide
The gleaming prospect showed, and then she grew
On a sudden weary, and lay down and died.

I said she shall not die, so soon: I wept
The cruel tears of men: I beat my breast
In love's amazing grief: I made sore quest
Of Him, Death's master: hot and passionate spake
My heart to her: 'Awake, awake, awake:
Shake off this mask of death.' And, lo! she slept.

WHEN sad thoughts come to me of my life's part,
The strife of circumstance, the deadly loss;
And how my golden youth has turned to dross
And basest alchemy, my wearied heart
Misgives me till I pluck from memory's page
Those who made grief majestic, while they sung,
Spake, wrote with burning lips of fire, and flung
The trumpet-call to men down the far age.

The mighty Son of God, Grief's awful sign,
Apart: then earth's giant heroes, Socrates,
Beethoven, Milton, Luther—greater than kings;
Our Shakespeare, Dante—all the glorious line.
What they endured I can, and, tuned to these,
My soul looks up, and tricks her drooping wings.

Vision

ON A BLIND MAN, IMPROVISING UPON THE PIANOFORTE

I THOUGHT the heavens were opened as he
played,

So sweet the sounds that from the ivory keys
He subtly drew, so wild the melodies
Which brake on my rapt soul. I said:
'This is no mortal gift; the Gods do aid
His weakness.' Then I saw his face, calm peace
Upon it, as he smote with seeming ease
The maddest music ever man had made.

O, wondrous gift, which can for one lost sense
Such recompense bestow, that thro' blind eyes
Shines the full vision of earth's mysteries!

O, heavenly light, that can the day restore,
When all is dark, making the more intense
That light whose beams first took the shining shore!

Christmas, 1900

CHRISTMAS, 1900

PEACE and Goodwill: Goodwill toward men, on earth

Peace: so the joyous bells ring out again
The Advent of that universal reign,
As Peace lay cradled in a spotless Birth.
Here is not peace, but war: man smiting man
With hands that drip with blood: hate's horrid cries:
The dead: the dying: women's tearless eyes:
Hell's glutted orgies, Saturnalian.

Goodwill! Ah, yes! If from these fields of blood
Peace shall arise, like the first Christmas morn,
Peace with her white wings and her silver tongue;
While two proud peoples, self-reliant, strong,
Shall clasp warm hands of love, that sons unborn
May labour for an Empire's lasting good.

Vision

CHRISTMAS, 1913

THIS is the day of days, whereon was born
The Christ of God. He left His Father's side,
Veiling ineffable glory, thus to abide
With sinful man. O happy, happy morn !
He came, light-charioted, to a world forlorn :
He brought us life and love. He came to guide
Man nigh to God, and by our hands He died,
Man's byword and derision, his shame and scorn.

And still the world rejects Him, Him the meek
And gentle Jesus : ever it waits to speak
With Pleasure, the harlot, lends its willing ears
To her false tongue, and, heedless of all fears,
Turns from that Face, furrowed with burning tears,
Or turns to spit, and buffet either Cheek !

TWO friends thou hast, for all thy cheerful pride,
O soul, to aid thee in the farthest case ;
Two that shall circle thee with fast embrace :
Thyself, and thy own God; nor any beside.
Trust not, in thy conceit, what men will say
Thro' foolish love of thee ; believe it not :
Our human faith, in humanest weakness wrought,
Grows faint, and on a sudden dies away.

Learn, then, to know thyself, to trust thy will
In quiet dispassion. Yet, if thou labour so,
Thou shalt not trust, nor know. For what are we
But random dust caught in the flying wheel
Of Time? Far wiser, if thou seek to know
The Potter's mind, His Heart of Constancy.

Vision

O MIGHTY people, valiant in a cause
Your own, uplift in your right hands the flail
Of vengeance, rain your righteous blows like hail :
Break loose these bonds: ye are not oaten straws.
Up, tear your birthright from the swollen jaws
Of Mammon ! Up, in your new strength, nor quail
Before the opposing odds: ye shall not fail,
Tho' might is right, and ye be Time's outlaws !

Liberty is the breath of men: be free
And walk erect as men. Will you be slaves
Of custom, circumstance? Then are ye knaves
Indeed: better to die and cease to be.
Slink to your holes: into your nameless graves,
Scourings of men, sweepings of tyranny.

THERE are who bluster: 'all men take their dues,
Could we the whole appraise: fame to whom fame
Is meet, the world's kiss, and fat revenues:
To some the loss, and penury's tingling shame.'
Others: 'There must be rich and poor: high, low,
Great, small are parts of the machine.' Some say:
'Life came from chaos, to chaos it must go:
Faith, love, truth, honour—these have passed away.'

But are these reasons why the poor should toil,
Air, food, joy, all to them denied, because
Men must grow rich? why thousands grind and moil
For one who scoops the lot? Who set these laws?
I'd rather be yond stone, and line a road,
Than be a man, without a heart or God.

Vision

MATRIS DOLOR

AND this the end: this weight of barren grief,
A The thornèd crown to all my prayers and tears.
A life just given, just loved, and taken: his brief
Bright dayshine quenched in night. O stolid ears,
That erstwhile caught his prattle of music: eyes
Grown dark with your great agony! My sweet,
So frail, so fair, on whom death's witchery lies
In waxen lips, and waxen hands and feet!

Was it done well, dear Christ, to smite so sore
This mother heart of mine? I had not known
What love was, till he came, and coming, gave
Newness to all, and joys never dreamed before.
O heart of mine, crushed, bleeding, overthrown,
And lost at the dumb misery of the grave!

Death of a Friend

ON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF A
ROMAN CATHOLIC FRIEND,

WHO HAD ASKED THE AUTHOR TO WITNESS THE
CEREMONY OF HIS TAKING FINAL Vows

HOW many a well-aimed lance we two did break
In that fair cloister by the lone sea wall,
Before the shadow of time began to fall!
Roman, you asked if I would see you take
Your final vows. I would not go with you,
The Puritan in me dominant, yet I prayed
That you might keep the austere vows you made,
Be God's good priest indeed, strong, pure and true.

Well, you have passed within the veil, have met
The Master, face to face. My eyes are wet,
But not with desperate tears: for thinking of
Your beautiful life, filled to the lips with love,
High Seneschal to the cause you did espouse,
Dead priest and friend, I think you kept your vows.

Vision

A PAUSE ON THE RIVER

BATTERSEA BRIDGE, 11 A.M.

I

A PAUSE on the river between the tides:
The tugs laid up, and the wind dead calm.
And the hush on the Thames, as it dreamily slides,
Like some far-chanted psalm !

II

A golden gauze across the sky,
Glitter of gold in the tremulous air:
A haze of houses and boats hard by:
Gold and light everywhere !

III

The bargeman, gay with a brief repose,
Whistles an idle tune:
He recks of nothing, for well he knows
The tide will turn at noon.

IV

And well for the bargeman and his wife
That day has one bright boon:
Ah, well in the roar and traffic of life
To find some rest at noon !

A Pause on the River

v

Dear God! For a halt in the sweep of the years:
One little hour to think and pray,
Before the ebb tide comes and bears
Us quite away!

CONVENT PICTURES

I

THE NOVICE

I

HE knelt by the altar-lamp's pale light,
The Novice, at her evening prayer:
Her hands were meekly clasped, her fair
Young form was garmented in white.

II

She seemed as one in that high mood,
When, to our quickened senses, Heaven
Flings wide its gates; to whom is given
A flash of Him Who bore the Rood.

III

And later, walking on the grass
Beneath the chapel windows dim,
Hearing the organ's glorious hymn
Still in my ears, I saw her pass.

Vision

IV

She moved like Peace itself, and all
 Her heart at rest. Eyes, lips and brow,
 With thought as pure as falling snow,
Were set in calm ineffable.

V

God has His various ministers
 To do His sovereign purpose. I
 Find peace in the world's great battle-cry:
She here hath lit on hers.

II

THE SISTER

I

I SAW her in her sable dress,
 When first I passed within its walls,
 The Sister, whom the convent calls
Mary. Some trace of loveliness

II

Yet in her face was evident:
 Of regal beauty that she wore
 In far-off, happy days, before
Her heart was crushed, her body bent.

Convent Pictures

III

Her step was timid, her voice low;
Her smile was ghostly, faint and wan:
The saddest face to look upon
She had, in all this world of woe.

IV

With trembling mouth and mournful eyes
She moved, a weary weight of pain:
A heart that dares not hope again,
A tortured soul that never dies.

V

I thought of what she might have been,
Proud mother of fair girls and boys;
Ruling, amid its sacred joys,
Her little kingdom, she its queen.

III

THE MOTHER SUPERIOR

I

I WAITED in the long, low hall;
She came and spoke with easy grace:
There was fine feeling in her face,
Her figure slight, erect and tall.

Vision

II

The unquestioned rule, the strong command
Showed in the look from her bright eyes,
The slow firm step, her quick replies,
And in the movement of the hand.

III

Wide was her faith, her judgment clear :
We thought on many things the same :
Our needs, the woman's new, false claim,
Death, life, and all we hold most dear.

IV

She took me to the chapel, thro'
The lovely gardens, by still grave
And cloister-arch : then freely gave
The help I sought for one I knew.

V

We parted by the sacristy :
She saw I was not of her fold,
But with a woman's heart of gold
She said that she would pray for me.

VI

What matters if some fault do mar
Her faith or mine ? She cannot see
The things that are so clear to me,
Nor I to her. We will not war.

Convent Pictures

VII

For in this world of sin and night,
When riot and wrong have drawn the sword,
We serve the same once-risen Lord :
We stand together in the fight.

LOVE IS BEST

MUCH gold, and lordly race,
And god-like genius seated in the brain;
But, oh, for gentle hands in hours of pain,
And simple grace !

Fierce will, and high behest,
And purpose that shall match whate'er befall :
A kind heart is a dearer thing than all,
And love is best.

SONG

LISETTE

I

LISETTE has hair of waving jet:
Lisette !

And cheeks that silken lashes fret :
Lisette !

Her way is o'er the Alp track wild,
Her form as light as a summer breeze ;
Her eyes are gates of dreaming seas :
She is the mountain's fairy child.

Vision

Love, laughing, holds me in his net
Since that bright hour, where first I met
Lisette !

II

Her soul in deep on deep is set;
Lisette !

The truest, sweetest woman yet:
Lisette !

The mountain tops, chine, slope and spear,
Stand, folded in eternal snows,
Less pure than she, who throbs and glows,
A breathing spirit, crystal-clear.

Love bids me pay his constant debt,
Which cannot, if it would, forget
Lisette !

WOULD you know true life, true gladness ?
Enter into others' sadness.

This is true:

Noble hearts find the way sweet
When with acts of love they greet
Those by sorrow broken ;
So may you.
Every kindly token
Offered to another when in pain
Fails nothing, but comes back to bless again.

Prayer

PRAYER

I ASK not wealth, dear Christ, nor power
With men, nor holy ease
In cloistered gardens, nor the surpassing dower
Of love. Not these,
O Father, nor a weary length
Of years: not happiness,
Nor any mortal good, but only strength.
Such pains do press
About me, and such weakness lies
In this frail body. Give
That strength by which a man may compass ere he dies,
And, dying, live.

For with new strength
I may do what I love the best:
Then length be depth, breadth, height, and with *this*
length
I'll take the rest.

Vision

AT SEA

NI GHT on the waste of waters, and thick cloud
Around, and imminent storm, which murmurs
loud.

Darkness beneath, above the jetted dome:
I cannot see, and ever more
The lights upon the receding shore
Are lost in distance and the towering foam.

I am alone upon the deep, wide sea,
Wide, deep, in measureless infinity.

Night in the troubled soul, and bitter dark
About the track of my lone-wandering bark.

I cannot sound this life: within, without
The mystery grows. Only I know
Thou art, hast been, shalt be. And so,
Thro' black despair, and tears and doubt,
I ask not whence I came, or where I be,
So that I keep my course and ride to Thee.

THE VISION

I

ONE sabbath eve at Easter-tide
We rang the old church bells:
The music filled the countryside,
Flooding the woods and dells.

The Vision

II

We four had met upon the hill
Making holiday together.

We vowed the vows that schoolboys will
Among the gorse and heather.

III

We longed to mount the high church-tower,
And ring an evening chime :
We were just loose from school, we four,
In the glad spring time.

IV

We bribed the ringers, man and boy,
We seized the smooth, worn strands:
They were amazed to see our joy,
As they guided our young hands.

V

We pulled and pulled: how weirdly rang,
From door and beam and rafter,
That vibrant crash, that silver clang,
Two seconds after !

VI

The evening air smote clear and bright
Across the belfry bars,
And as we moved we caught the light
Of ever-deepening stars.

Vision

VII

The evening air came cool and sweet
With early summer scent:
It was a sabbath evening, meet
For sacrament.

VIII

A soft wind rose with fitful sound,
And woke the sleeping firs:
We heard upon the distant ground
The tread of worshippers.

IX

An infinite hush on field and stream,
The whirr of wings above
Fell like the splendour of a dream,
A dream of exquisite love;

X

With calm and rapture made intense;
The soul's pure calm which brings
Us nigh to God: that strange, near sense
Of hidden, holiest things.

XI

Then, as the daylight ebbed away,
The night a mystery held;
A Spirit, not of human clay,
A living Presence, felt.

The Vision

xii

And darkly seen of matchless grace,
Prevailing Glory, veiled in gloom:
Did God Himself, for one brief space,
Descend and fill the room?

xiii

What angel touched my startled sight
With pale, sweet lips of pain,
And set in lines of trembling light
The vision on my brain?

xiv

The weary years, they idly pass;
They have no power to mar:
The aureole of the heaven that was
Shines from afar.

xv

It shines upon these later days
When the hopes of youth are dead:
About my tiring feet it plays,
Lighting the road I tread.

xvi

I see the turret, bars and walls,
I hear those bells once more:
I feel the twilight as it falls:
I press the old oak floor.

Vision

xvii

The merry group, the wild delight,
The stars beyond the hill:
The solemn mystery of the night,
I see and feel it still.

xviii

I think of all that's passed since then,
The loss, the doubtful gain:
Of boys grown into thoughtful men,
That never met again.

xix

Yet I will hold, while I have breath,
That God is a sure Giver:
And life is truer far than death,
And all's not lost for ever.

xx

So dream I, from my heart of love,
We boys may gather there,
In the tower of that great Church above,
And call the souls to prayer;

xxi

When He, in utter glory clear,
Not veiled in doubt or gloom,
Shall to our staring eyes appear,
Lord of the open tomb.

Palm Sunday

PALM SUNDAY

I

I

THIS is Palm Sunday by Church law,
Palm Sunday with its willow flowers:
The first of that dread week, which saw
Our mortal Saviour's last, sad hours.

II

And he was dead, the beautiful boy,
Dead in the flowering of his youth:
Whose presence made our constant joy;
Whose lips were pure, whose heart was truth.

III

We thought that his had been the gift
To wash the stain of sin away:
To brighten our dull shield, and lift
Us to a prouder, worthier day.

IV

He was the youngest of our race,
The darling and the flower of home:
The youngest and the first to pass
Into the silence of the tomb.

Vision

v

A broad, full brow, a noble mien,
Marked with the seal of high desire:
A tender mouth, an eye serene
With promise of celestial fire.

vi

His mind was large, his discourse kind,
And often, when he mused and spoke,
Rooted, we listened, as his mind
In sudden lightnings broke.

vii

And when he sang in the Chapel choir,
His fresh, young voice rose clear and bright;
A lark's song, never wont to tire,
Beating against the gates of light.

viii

What dreams we dreamed, what hope was ours,
In his fulfilled maturity!
We waited thro' the leaden hours
The harvest of the grain to be.

ix

A deep, wide river flows between
The present and that happy past:
Ah, me: that awful 'might have been:'
If joy could last!

Palm Sunday

x

So brief the time, so few the years
In which we hourly learnt to prove
The mutual converse that endears,
The depth, breadth, height of perfect love.

xi

Death, pitiless in his harsh command,
And ever envious of delight:
Death touched him with his icy hand,
And drew him with resistless might.

xii

I watched the light ebb from his face,
I saw the glazing of his eye:
I marked him in Death's cold embrace:
I saw him die.

II

I

HE had been dead three days and lay
As one asleep. In sullen mood
We watched the early morn away,
Then came to where the coffin stood.

II

The year before, this holy fast,
He brought the palm and decked the wall,
And filled the waiting bowls and cast
A loving look on all.

Vision

III

We talked of these and deeper things;
Of summer hopes that here lay dead:
We thought of him with golden wings
Quiring his way. And then we said:

IV

‘This is Palm Sunday: let us set
The sacred flowers about his bier.
He must not think that we forget
The past of many a yester year.’

V

We placed the palm upon his breast,
And wreathed the stems about his hands:
And so we laid him to his rest,
To meet in other, happier lands.

III

I

I CANNOT think that he is dust
And ashes, tho’ the body be:
The good, the noble and the just,
All things of high and rare degree,

II

Whatever else is cast away,
Must in far time be justified:
The infinite soul, is it reeking clay?
Has Christ in vain both lived and died?

Palm Sunday

III

Whatever lives, whatever dies,
I think the best survives the grave:
God cannot mock our deepest cries,
Nor is man wholly Death's bond slave.

IV

For he was noble, just and good,
A spark of God in human shape:
A creature of gay and generous blood,
And something better than the ape.

V

So good, so true, that tho' the tomb
Receive him, even we who saw him die,
Cannot believe the end is come,
Nor speak the word 'good-bye.'

VI

Tho' dead to us, we think him still
Living, with freer, vaster powers:
Only removed from mortal ill,
And kept by gentlier hands than ours.

IV

I

O SUFFERING heart, on whom was laid
The burden of such bitter pain,
Your woe is past; the debt is paid:
We could not wish you here again.

Vision

II

Nor summer's heat, nor winter's cold,
Nor all the griefs that vex mankind,
Nor withering age as men grow old,
Nor all the tumults of the mind

III

Can touch you now. A long, long life
Awaits you on the other shore,
Bereft of human woe and strife,
Even for evermore.

IV

Beyond the verge of place and time,
Beyond the reach of death or tears,
Your spirit in a sunlit clime
Lives thro' the changeless years.

V

The secret of the farthest spheres
Has flashed its glory in your eyes.
What music plays about your ears?
What splendour dwells in those far skies?

VI

We walk in darkness: you have been
Where walk the deathless sons of light.
O, awful thought! Your eyes have seen
God, clear in naked sight.

Palm Sunday

VII

O crescent star! O glad young soul!
O radiant beam in heaven's sheer height,
Sweeping in joy from pole to pole!
O wanderer in the fields of light,

VIII

Loving and ever beloved one,
We kiss you with a holy kiss,
And give you back to God's dear Son:
God gave you: you are His!

IX

O restless brain in utter calm!
O brow, where death and life did meet!
We crown you with a wreath of palm,
And lay you at the Saviour's feet.

FOUNTAINS AT PLAY

I

I LOVE to see the fountains play
In the light of a summer day:
When the sun is bright and clear
In our gauze-spun atmosphere.
I love to see the water rise,
White water against pale blue skies.
I love to watch the beady rain
As it falls home again.

Vision

II

I love to see the fountains play
In the heat of a summer day:
Amid the glare and drowse of noon,
When the air is faint and the senses swoon.
I love to watch them as they throw
White roses in the pool below:
A ring of quivering roses white,
Pleasant and cool to the wearied sight.

III

I love to see the fountains play
In the grime of a summer day:
While the toilers, passing by,
Pause and give a happy sigh.
So airy, and delicate, they seem
Bright fancies in a happy dream,
Or spirits from some far-off clime
In a world of toil and grime.

IV

I love to hear the fountains play
Their water-harps: so soft and gay
The dulcet harmonies that they make.
With artless joy they deftly shake
The glittering strings. Upon the ear
The music falls, low, blithe and clear,

Fountains at Play

With songs as sweet as those we heard,
When first the living impulse stirred :
Songs which in shining rivers ran,
Before the boy became a man.

v

O fountains, you are like my dreams
With your rainbow gleams.
My thoughts, like you, ever aspire
To reach a higher and a higher.
You come from your quiet resting place
To live and breathe a little space.
I come :—Ah ! whence, I cannot know.
What shall I pass to, when I go ?
Yet for a while your waters rise
In an imaged garden of Paradise,
Tireless and happy, radiant, free,
As my soul would ever be.

A COTTAGE GARDEN

I

ALMOST beyond the track of men it lies,
My cottage garden. It is lorn and desolate,
Buried in bowering trees, and neighbourless,
But free to sun and wind. O the bright sun,
Which shines in the morning thro' the open pane,
And glitters all day long amid the flowers !

Vision

O sweet, sweet air, that plays upon my lips
An eternal song! O twilight wind that brings
Old memories of her, which make this ground
My holy, holy garden! Westward slope
The noble Downs, blue-misted: to the East
A speckled view of thatch and farm and field,
And moving pasture lands, with many a belt
Of yellow corn between. Behind it glides
A little stream, and farther still a gloomed
Pan-palace of pine and fir. It looks upon
A lone, wide common, stained with purple heath.

II

It is a simple garden, half a wild,
But trained with ordered negligence. The rare
Frequenter on the lonely road marks not
The little spot, or marks it but to pass.
Yet I, who love the place, can see nothing
But beauty in it: here I often come
When tired of the great city's roar, and dream
My dreams: here I throw off, as cumbrous weeds,
The blare and pomp of Town: here find sweet rest
And serene calm, and all the joy of thought.

III

Trim lines of box mark out the tiny paths,
Which run in wayward sweetness. Here and there
A few old fruit-trees stand, like well-tried friends,
That never fail, apple and pear and plum;

A Cottage Garden

In spring a billowy mass of pink and white,
In autumn yellow and red. One little stretch
Is kept for grain or roots: the slip beyond
The well supplies the kitchen: all the rest
Is garden and the flowers I love so well.

IV

The year is one full pageant which unfolds
Bewildering glories as the seasons pass.
First comes the snowdrop, darling harbinger
Of spring, and crocus, yellow and blue: after,
Anemone, child of the wind, the daffodil
And primrose, sulphur-flowered, iris, cowslip,
Striped tulip, hyacinth with its trembling bells.

V

Then summer comes, gay Goddess, with her soft
Bright eyes and laughing lips. Swiftly she pours
Her full lap on the amorous earth. As in
A dream the enamelled garden glows and takes
New moods of shape and colour. The clear breeze
From our near hills, that lingers lovingly
About the spot, is warm with mingled sweets.
Roses and pinks, and roving mignonette,
Hedges of brier, musk, gilliflowers, big tufts
Of sweet pea, lilies and dim violets,
Starred jasmine, and the honeysuckle's whorl
Of yellow, cloves and blue-gray lavender

Vision

Empty their fragrance to the enchanted air
In reckless rivalry. And, in the quiet
Night-time, the heavy-scented nicotine
Perfumes the dark, unseen.

VI

And beautiful flowers
Scentless, as there are beautiful birds that charm
Without a song, pierce the vibrating air
With brilliant dyes, or rest the wandering eye
With soberer hue. The shining borage-star
Lurks in far corners by King Solomon's seal.
Wild thyme and homely thrift, great peonies
Alight, sky-blue forget-me-nots, and pink
Or white campion, velvety clematis,
Pansies and foxgloves, dusky veronica,
Lupin, monk's-hood, and rows of giant sunflowers
Grow as they will, if so they grow but well.
An old sun-dial stands in the middle walk
To tell us time is flying: at the end
A low archway, whereon that sad, sweet flower
Twines leaf and stem, and bears its mournful blooms
For us to muse upon the death of Christ.

VII

Nor lacks the waning year her tribute due.
The dahlia, with big petals, many-hued—
That scentless rose of autumn—late jasmine,

A Cottage Garden

Chrysanthemums, as golden as their name,
Or colour of wine, and last the winter rose,
Brighten the sadness of our shortening days,
And make complete the garland of the year.

VIII

Dear is the fragrance of these perfumed flowers,
But dearer and more fragrant still the thoughts
That cling about her. Bright as these jewelled eyes,
They are not bright as her own loveliness
Was, while she moved among her flowers, perfect
In beauty. O happy days that we have spent
In this old garden ! O divine discourse,
That sounded the profoundest deeps of our
Soul's being ! I cannot walk but that I see
Something which brings her back. The little gate
There by the orchard stands, where she was wont
To lean and watch the dying sun. The lines
Of rose trees her dear hands have day by day
Watered and tended with such loving care:
The window boxes, trailing their white plumes,
With many a long-remembered nook and tree
Are redolent still of her. Even by day
Her gentle presence seems to haunt the place
Making each flower and tree, the very stones,
Familiar to the sense. But at evening,
When the feverish day dies down, and the quiet soul
Knows itself and is master ; when the thought
Sets towards God as naturally as the heart

Vision

Beats or the breath comes and goes, O, then she takes
Manifest feature. Like the pale lady-moon
Her memory rises, serene, pure and still
Flooding this garden with her argent light.

IX

I think she sometimes leaves those starry heights,
Where her home is, to wander here with me.
So close she seems, I almost feel her breath
Upon my burning cheek, and look into
Those luminous eyes, and read the thoughts they speak.
But I do know she lives and is not far,
Tho' mortal sense and touch and sight are all
Too gross to catch her, such pure spirit is she
And distilled essence. Often amid the rush
And moil of things, in city or in field,
When I am sick and faint, and my heart low,
Musing upon this empty life, waiting
My call, and asking to be called, I have felt
A subtle presence over me, have felt
The joy of sudden intercourse and known
Our hearts have touched and found new strength.
And chiefliest in this garden have I felt
Her near me, heard the beating of her soul's
Bright wings, the words her trembling lips would say :
‘True love is deathless, nor can change nor pass.’

St. Hugh of Lincoln

ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN

REGUM MALLEUS

God, when He blessed and left His infant Church—
Weak as a child, new-born, yet strong to resist
Evil, as a child is, for His parting gift
Was life—before the last goodbyes were said,
Promised that He was ever with them. He
Is truth, and cannot lie. Thro' many an hour
Of danger, doubt, vicissitude, the Church
Has been divinely kept, upheld by Him
Who made the worlds. Amid the arid wastes
Of spiritual apathy, when she seemed dead,
And Christ asleep, yet has there never failed
A man to stand before Him, living sons
Of the Most High, who deemed life not a gift
For passion's sport, but a trust to use; who served
Their conscience, and moved, no, not by a hair's breadth
From the inflexible line, but lived and died
In noble striving and endeavour great.

Of such was Lincoln's Hugh, Hammer of Kings.
Long cycles of neglect and ruinous tax,
For war in France and Ireland, made that fair

Vision

Wide Diocese, from Thames to Humber, rank
As a wilderness. For seventeen weary years
The See was vacant, licence and fell rapine
Raising their hydra heads, until he came.
Full scope he found for his unceasing wit
And vigorous will; beat down the gross abuse,
Fearing and favouring nought. At length the land
Became a garden, where the good seed might grow.

High purpose, shining thro' his fearless eyes,
And lighting all the brow with ecstasy,
Made a Saint's halo: in his gentle heart
A tender pity, like an angel, mused.
An iron heart for wrong, a woman's heart
For the helpless and oppressed. The poor he loved
Even as his Master did, with love divine,
Instant to raise, cheer, succour; shaped his life
To be a record of innumerable acts
Of kindness, the good man's individual sign,
Content only to serve. Thus the poor knew
Him for a saintly bishop. The mute things
That run or fly, by some mysterious law,
Lodged in their turbid natures, turned to him,
Joyous and unafraid. Birds came to pick
The crumbs between his fingers. The famed swan,
Huge, untamed beast, that drove and killed its kind,
Was broken by him to extreme gentleness,
And ever kept an unforgetting love.

St. Hugh of Lincoln

So after years of absence would it flap
Its wings, and with an almost human cry
Half run, half fly, to be caressed and stroked.

Nathless, against wrong-doing or the abuse
Of power, aye, tho' it were in the king himself,
He sternly set his face. Twice he withstood
Fierce Henry's anger, holding the Church of God
Dearer than England's crown; and won the king
To own there was a man in England yet,
Who nothing feared him. But his crowning act
Was to outbrave the spleen of the Lion-heart,
Terror and scourge of men. Richard had made
Demand on baron, bishop, priest, for wars
With France. The bishops in their conclave met
Were each for yielding: at the last Hugh spoke.
'Our homage to the king goes not so far,'
He said, 'as service in his foreign wars,'
And would not budge.

Then all the bishops rose
In vexed confusion, and good Hugh's defiance
Was carried to the king. He, past himself
With rage, and storming like the true virago
Whenever her will is crossed, swore fifty oaths
That he would be revenged on this pert priest,
And bring him, trembling, to his knees: then sent
Orders to seize his goods. When the king's men,
Dreading the curse, delayed, and could not do

Vision

This bidding, Hugh crossed straight to France, to beard
The Lion. At Rouen, where Richard's camp then lay,
A few brave nobles met him, warning him,
With tears, his life was forfeit, if he dared
Approach the king. But Hugh pushed on, and reached
The Church where the Crusader was hearing Mass.
Dread and amazement fell on all within
As Hugh stood at the door; but in he passed
Quickly: then, as the hearts of men stood still
For fear, strode simply to the kneeling king:
'Give me the kiss of peace, my Lord,' he said,
And waited, while the priest who held the Bread
Stood, speechless, at the Altar, and the eyes
Of all were fixed. Without a word the king
Turned from him: but the other said again,
'Kiss me, my Lord, for I have come from far
To see thee.' 'You have not deserved it,' came
The bitter answer, when Hugh flung him back:
'Nay, but I have,' and plucked him by the robe.
Then Richard turned and glared him in the face.
As a fierce mountain brute, whose grinding jaws
Lather in deadliest hate, holds fast its prey
With balls that shoot hot lightning, while they roll
In bloody sockets, ere it springs: so looked
Richard at Hugh. But in that faithful heart
No fear was, save the fear of doing wrong.
With equal eye he met the king's wild hate
Unmoved, unshaken, and gave him to his face
Good stare for stare. And all at once the fire

St. Hugh of Lincoln

Of hell passed from the mad king's eyes, as when
A candle is put out. So Richard kissed,
And gave the Wafer to his rebel priest,
And God's just dues were kept inviolate.

Seven centuries have passed since Richard and Hugh
Slept in the common dust. Of this true priest
Two memories bide. The stately pile he planned
Still lifts its lofty grandeur into the skies
Above the huts of men, symbol of him,
Whose mind was great as the great church he built.
But grander than all things of wood and stone,
Marble or gold, the challenge he handed down
Of one strong human soul, that drew its strength
From God, and stood alone while all the world
Went past, and dared a noble thing, because
He deemed it right. And the splendour of that deed,
Passing from mouth to mouth thro' all these years,
And quickening men, wherever men are found,
Still stirs our hearts as with a trumpet call,
Even to-day, in this dead, shameful age.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE

FAREWELL TO THE CITY

I

COATS of broadcloth, silken stockings,
Cuffs immaculately white,
Delicate speech and soft embraces ;
Ah, if they knew love's depth and height !

II

If the warm blood, red and living,
Leapt along their frozen veins !
I hate their lies and their false swearing,
Liars, with dissembling pains !

III

I will take me to the mountains,
To the huts of pious men.
Oh, to be free, and feel on my feverish
Lips God's mountain air again.

IV

To the mountains will I take me,
Where dark pine-trees reach the sky :
'To fluting birds and laughing rivers
And the lordly clouds that fly.

Vision

v

Fare ye well, dear halls of pleasure,
Men and women, treacherous-kind:
To the mountains will I take me,
Laughing as I look behind.

THE FISHER MAIDEN

I

O BEAUTIFUL fisher maiden, come,
Bring thy frail bark to shore:
Sit close by me and let us dream
Of love for one bright hour.

II

Lay thy tired head against my heart:
Why tremblest to be free?
Daily thy fearless life is cast
Upon the deep, wild sea.

III

My heart is like the deep, deep sea,
Has storm, and ebb and flow:
And many a splendid pearl lies hid
In those wild depths below.

Translations from Heine

I

WRAP'T in a cloak of dusky cloud
The Gods are sleeping peacefully:
I hear them as they snore, the while
A tempest strikes on land and sea.

II

How it roars! The storm's fell hate
Will shatter yonder trembling ship.
Ah! Who's is't to keep the waves?
What hand has let these wild winds slip?

III

I cannot hinder that it storms,
That mast and board are groaning deep;
So I'll wrap me in my cloak,
Like the mighty Gods to sleep.

I

THE night sea lay in shimmering gold
Of the last evening shine.
Silent, within a lonely hut
We sat, my hand in thine.

Vision

II

The white mist came, the waters rose;
I heard the sea-mew call:
When, sweet, from out thy dreaming eyes
The tears began to fall.

III

I saw them fall upon thy hand;
I sank upon my knee,
And kissed away from thy white hand
The tears that fell for me.

IV

Since that sad hour my weary life
Dies with a lingering smart.
The tears I drank have poisoned me,
Body and soul and heart.

I

THE moon, a giant orange, rides
Above the night clouds, noiselessly;
And pours a ribbon of broken light
Upon the dark, mysterious sea.

Translations from Heine

II

Alone I wander by the shore,
Where the waves break, silver-white:
I hear their voices, laughing-sweet,
Their music in the quiet night.

III

Ah! the night is far too long:
My heart, my heart must break or sing.
Sea-nymphs, leave yon weedy couch,
Sing and dance in the magic ring.

IV

On your bosom take my head,
Soul and body, I long for rest.
Sing me, love me, till I die;
Kiss my life from out my breast.

THE RUINED MILL

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF J. N. VOGL.]

I

THE night was stormy, cold and drear:
The old count on his old horse rode,
Silent, alone: nor far nor near
The light of human dwelling showed,

Vision

II

His hair was gray, his bent, spare form
Looked like the gnarled oak's twisted strength,
That winters the thousandth winter storm
To fall one summer eve at length.

III

He passed into the forest grim;
Dread nor loneliness felt he,
For a giant's heart he bore with him,
And he rode full cheerily.

IV

Only the fire of his fearless eyes
Burned in the dark as he strode along;
And under his breath, to his own surprise,
He whistled an old love song.

V

Darker and drearier grew the way,
Rock frowned on rock in threatening mood,
When by the faint moon's struggling ray
A ruined mill before him stood.

VI

Roofless and desolate, broken, bare,
It rose, nor living sight nor sound
Stirred, save for the bleak night air
Which shook the wreck about the ground.

The Ruined Mill

VII

Half hidden by huge stones and coarse
Rank weed, a solitary seat of stone
The old count saw. He stayed his horse,
Drew to the bench and sat thereon.

VIII

Old was the count, and worn and spent,
And sweet it is in age to rest.
His bright eye closed, his head low bent,
His chin fell gently on his breast.

IX

At once the place began to stir:
The timbers flew, the roof came on:
The rubble broke with a dull murmur,
Clicked, and fitted, stone to stone.

X

Round went the wheel: the water splashed:
The millstones turned and ground the corn.
Again the glorious sunshine flashed
As when God spake on the first morn.

XI

From the dark mill-house into the light
The miller stepped, smiling and fat;
Like a moving snow-man, all in white,
From his white boots to his snow-white hat.

Vision

XII

His merry men with their bursting sacks
Ran hither and thither, a swarm of gnats;
They laughed at the burden on their backs,
But they swore very low as they trod on the rats.

XIII

And down the path, like a meteor bright,
Child of love and joy and laughter;
Moving in her own sweet light,
Came the miller's youngest daughter.

XIV

Her face was fair, her eye as blue
As a blue sky in cloudless weather:
Her ribboned hair in the light wind flew:
Tress and ribbon danced together.

XV

She brought the count a glass of wine,
Meshed sunlight gleamed from stem to rim:
He saw its purple bubbles shine:
Old loves, old memories woke in him.

XVI

He stretched his hand to take the glass,
Handsome and gay and debonair:
She smiled upon him, then did pass,
Like a ghost, into the empty air.

The Ruined Mill

xvii

Gone was the miller and the mill,
His merry men, the sacks of corn:
Only an old man dreamed there still,
And the ruin lay, a thing forlorn.

xviii

The old count mounted his steed again.
He turned to the night wind, cold and bleak:
With his thin rough hand, like one in pain,
He brushed a great tear from his cheek.



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